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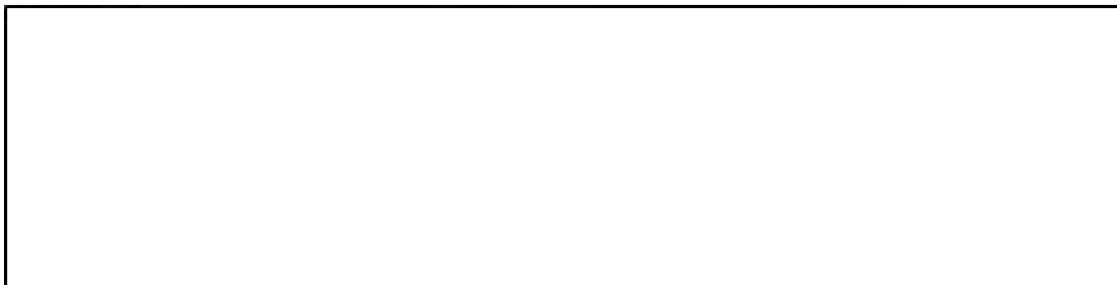
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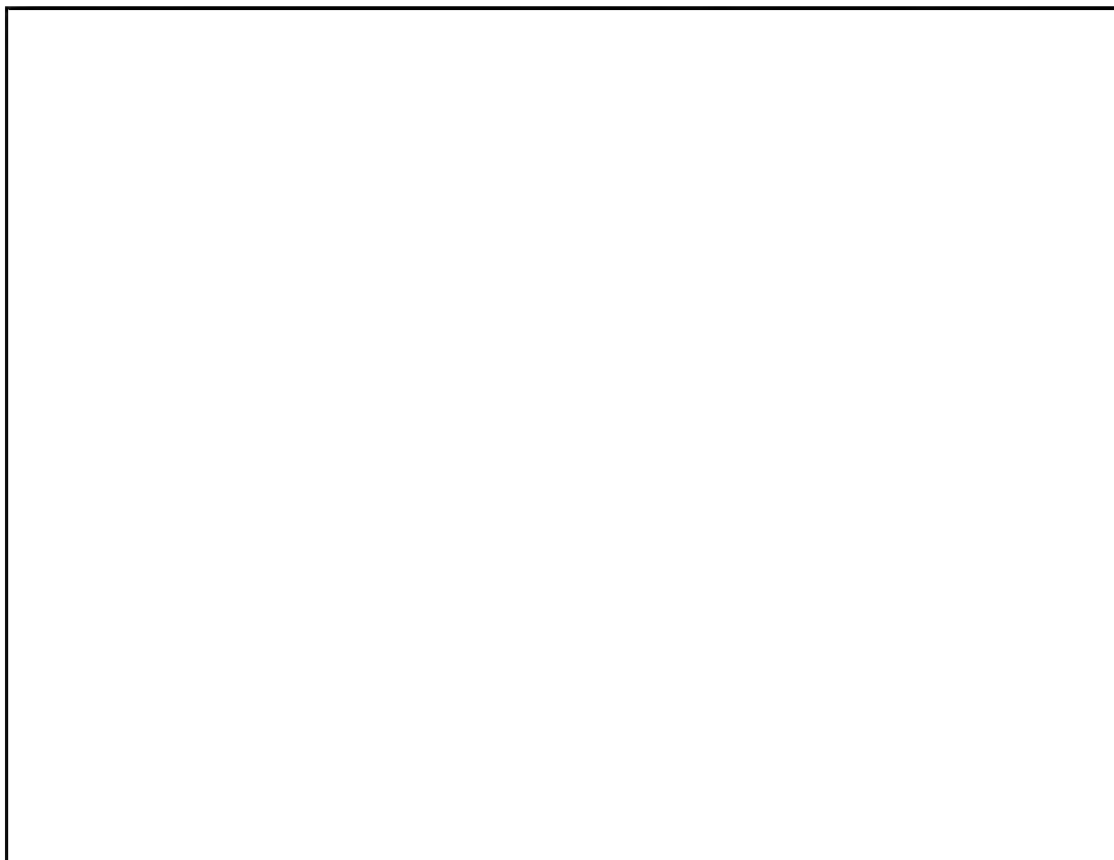
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ROMANIA: Postponement of Ceausescu's trips abroad
probably caused by domestic political problems.
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ROMANIA: Domestic political problems probably have caused the postponement of President Ceausescu's trips to Japan and West Germany scheduled for June.

An unusually high number of personnel changes in the party secretariat since early 1971 have created apprehension in some quarters in Bucharest. There are rumors that they are only the first of fairly extensive changes to be made at a party conference scheduled for July. Ceausescu may now be encountering opposition to these proposed changes and, therefore, may feel that he cannot afford the luxury of foreign travel at this juncture.

Ceausescu may also be concerned that he is vulnerable because of his foreign travels. There are uncorroborated reports that his recent tour of eight African and Arab states has come under criticism. Moreover, Romania's penchant for running up a huge foreign debt has left the president open to charges of fiscal irresponsibility.

Neither singly nor collectively do these problems present a real threat to Ceausescu's leadership at the moment. Given the nature of his authoritarian rule, however, he cannot overlook even a minor challenge. Therefore, he apparently has decided to take the initiative against what he regards as internal grumblings and will stay at home, defend his policies, and personally oversee preparations for the July conference. The day following the announcement of the postponements, Ceausescu addressed a conference of the Writers' Union and flatly reasserted the correctness of Romania's internal and foreign policies.

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